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ABSTRACT

Existing models for explaining individual educational attainment have not been particularly useful for explanations of the high dropout rate for black youths. This study employes a status attainment approach in analyzing the school dropout problem, using data from disadvantaged black youth who were enrolled in 1979 in a targeted job placement program funded by The Comprehensive Employment Training Act. The analysis shows that the school dropout rate among black youth in the program is related to family residential instability. In addition, it shows that dropouts tend to come from larger families than do high school graduates. Only weak relationships of parents education and youth aspirations with dropout rates are evidenced. (Author/APM)

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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES AMONG BLACK YOUTH

Rolf K. Blank, Ph.D

Prepared for the session on
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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES AMONG BLACK YOUTH

This paper is a summary of part of the research and evaluation results from James H. Lowry & Associates study of the Youth Employment Program (YEP) which is operated by the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund. The overall study was concerned with the relationship between school outcomes, participation in YEP, and employment following participation in the program. The research in this paper addresses three questions:

1) What are the differences between characteristics of black youth who have dropped out of school and those who have graduated?

2) What are the factors related to black youth leaving school?

3) How do the data on the YEP youth add to our understanding of the school-to-work transition?

The analyses are based on data from personal interview with about 200 black youth that were enrolled in YEP in 1979, The analyses are descriptive and the findings exploratory. The research is intended to enlarge our understanding of the process by which disadvantaged black youth either finish high school or leave school prior to graduation.

STATUS ATTAINMENT RESEARCH

Research on the process of education and occupation attainment has been a major focus of social scientists in the fields of education, sociology, and economics over the last several decades. The relationships between students' socio-economic background and their level of schooling and subsequent occupation has been an important area of social research since the 1940's (See, for example, Warner, W.L. and Lunt, 1942; Hollingshead, 1949). However, with the funding of large-scale national longitudinal surveys, the development of sophisticated

methodologies for data collection and analysis, and the application of the computer to the social sciences, more complex models for explaining student's educational and career outcomes were developed.

In the early 1960's, several major studies established the basis for development of multivariate status attainment models:

- The longitudinal study of Wisconsin High School Seniors of 1957 begun by Sewell, Haller, Duncan, and others, led to a multi-stage model for explaining college enrollment, graduation, and, later, occupational attainment. The "Wisconsin model" added social psychological variables to the understanding of status attainment. "Significant others influence," "Education aspirations," and "occupational aspirations" were found to have independent effects as intervening variables in the model.

- Blau and Duncan's research on The American Occupation Structure (1967) provided a method of explaining occupational status based on multi-variate analyses of a wide range of demographic and family background characteristics.

- A national longitudinal study of education achievement and attainment and occupational attainment, called "Project Talent," was funded by the Federal Government in 1965. The purpose of the study was to determine the long-term relationship between high school education, post-high school education, and career employment.

These large survey and data analysis studies tended to set the standard for research studies on the relationship of students' and characteristics to education and occupational outcomes.*

The development of multivariate, casual models for explaining educational and occupational attainment has resulted in better overall understanding of the specific factors that lead to a student completing a particular level of schooling. However, the voluminous number of studies using the status attainment models have tended to be concerned with specification of the relative

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* Several other major federally-funded national survey projects have added to the data base for research and analysis of the status attainment process, such as the Youth in Transition study (Institute for Social Research University of Michigan) and the National Longitudinal Survey of the Class of 1972 (NCES).

importance of factors that explain higher education attainment, such as earning a college degree, and higher occupational status and income. Some of the survey data used in status attainment types of analyses have not included youth who dropped out of high school (National Longitudinal Survey, 1972; Duncan, Haller, and Portes, 1968). Other studies, although they include data from a random sample of all high school students, tend to have more complete follow-up data on successful students and/or tend to focus their analyses on explanations of high education and status attainment (e.g. Crain and Mahard, 1978; Reitzes and Mutran, 1980). There are relatively few specific analyses using a sub-sample of youth which have had low education attainment.

A second weakness of the status attainment models is in explaining education and occupation outcomes for minority and other disadvantaged youth. The models do not explain variation in education level and occupation for blacks as well as they do for whites. The analysis of the data from the Equality in Educational Opportunity study (1965) in the original "Coleman report," and subsequent analyses , showed that when the equation for predicting white students' education achievement was fitted to black youth there was less explanatory power (Harvard Education Review, 1969). Jencks (1972) found that the multi-stage model used in their re-analysis of occupation and income attainment in the U.S. had significantly lower predictive capacity when it was used with blacks only. Analysis of the educational and status attainment of the general American population does not lend itself to explaining the relative failure/success of minorities in the education and occupation systems.

The development of the status attainment models for explaining education outcomes has also not facilitated research on the specific problem of school dropout rates in many school systems, particularly in large urban systems.

The long-term consequences of dropping out or being "pushed out" has also not been a major concern of analyses in the status sttainment literature.

The growing concern with the high rates of youth unemployment within the last several years has resulted in more attention being directed towards research on the causes and consequences of dropping out of high school. The Federal Government has funded several major efforts to survey high school dropouts. The National Center for Education Statistics has conducted a survey of the characteristics of school dropouts by state since the mid-1970's. NCES has also included collection of data on high school dropouts in the National Longitudinal Survey of the High School Class of 1978.

A second major thrust of the Federal Government into increasing research on school dropouts has been made in the Youth Amendments to CETA (1977). By funding demonstration programs and research that address the problem of youth unemployment and school-to-work transition, Congress and the Department of Labor have stimulated interest in research and analysis on school dropouts and the effects that leaving school has on youth participation in the labor market. Several major national longitudinal studies of disadvantaged youth and their school and job outcomes have been instituted through DOL, e.g. the National Longitudinal Study and the Current Labor Market Survey. In addition, a number of smaller-scale studies on the problems related to disadvantaged and minority youth finishing school and obtaining career employment have been supported through the Department of Labor.

RESEARCH UNDER YEDPA

The main outcome of YEDPA (Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act) has been to create and fund demonstration programs and projects for testing methods of a) increasing the school retention of disadvantaged youth, b) providing youth with

job training, and c) improving the transition from school-to-work. The Department of Labor - Office of Youth Programs has been responsible for the development of knowledge in these areas through research on the categorically funded programs (YETP and YCCIP) and the projects created with discretionary funds. The Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects (YIEPP) are providing a massive experiment on the effects of guaranteed jobs on youth school dropout rates, returning youth to education, and subsequent full-time employment following high school. New program designs are being tested for increasing employment of youth in the private sector, creating jobs through youth enterprises, and improving training and job development services for students.

Another approach that the Department of Labor has taken in developing knowledge on effective approaches to improving the school-work linkages is to fund projects that are designed to address the needs of specific target groups, e.g. handicapped, offenders, and minorities. One of the demonstration projects funded to test methods of serving target groups is the Youth Employment Program (YEP) operated by the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund.

THE APREF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The A. Philip Randolph Education Fund contracted with the Department of Labor to operate a demonstration program of training and job placement services for out-of-school minority youth. The program was developed out of the A. Philip Randolph Institute's recognition of the need for increased local activity in urban areas to combat minority youth unemployment. Discretionary funds under YEDPA provided funding for the APREF model for assisting youth in finding employment in the private sector.

During the first project year, 1978-79, the project was originated in eight cities which were selected upon the basis of having severe minority

youth unemployment problems, job growth potential, and a strong APR Institute chapter with extensive local networks of support. The chosen APR chapters were active in local union leadership and could thus provide assistance to the program with job development, training, and placement. The minority youth unemployment rate in the eight original cities, and three additional cities in the 1979-80 extended program, ranged from 16 percent to 54 percent.

The APREF program model being used in each site is based on:

1) outreach and recruitment to unemployed minority youth aged 16-21;

2) providing services such as counseling, orientation to the job market, tutoring, interviewing and GED training;

3) attempting to place the youth in full-time private sector jobs or referring them for further education or training services; and

4) following up with enrollees following termination.

At the end of the first year of the program, 3,463 youth had been enrolled and provided some services. Among the enrollees, 737 entered full-time employment (which exceeded the initial goal of 500 placements). Approximately 90 percent of the enrollees were out-of-school, unemployed, youth between age 16 and 21. All the enrollees came from families with incomes less than 70 percent of the lower living standard income level (LLSIL).

In the second year of the APREF program, funding for a research and evaluation study was provided. James H. Lowry and Associates (JHLA) was selected by APREF and DOL as the research subcontractor. The research objectives and the design of the study were jointly developed by YEP administrators and the research staff.

Two basic questions formed the research objectives for the study:

1) What are the reasons for high dropout rates among disadvantaged minority youth? i.e., what differentiates the youth who drop out of school from those who graduate?

2) What impact does the YEP (operated by APREF) have in improving participants' chances for full-time employment?

The status attainment model for explaining education and occupation outcomes formed the basis for hypothesis development and variable specification. With respect to addressing the first research objective - explaining school dropout rates among minority youth - the research design included analyzing the relationship of several participant characteristic variables to school graduation vs. dropping out. JHLA anticipated that at least three types of variables should be considered:

a) participant family background,

b) education and occupation aspirations, and

c) school performance and experiences.

METHODOLOGY

The research design called for collection of data on participant characteristics through individual interviews with a representative sample of YEP participants. Interviews were conducted by JHLA staff with youth in five program cities, which were selected to provide a fair representation of all the program sites in terms of participant characteristics, city size, economic conditions, and geographic location.

The plan for selecting respondents was designed to provide a comparative analysis between participants with different types of experiences with YEP. The sample strata were based on program status and services received through the program. The plan called for an equal number of individuals from each of

the five groups to be interviewed in each site. Due to limitations of time and funds, local YEP directors assisted in the selection and contacting of respondents. Interviews were conducted at the YEP offices in each site. As a result of these factors, the group of 212 respondents was not equally distributed across the sample strata.

The interview instrument was designed by JHLA to minimize the information that would be obtained in the course of one interview on the key study variables, such as participant background, attitudes, current status, and occupation and education aspirations. Since a longitudinal study would not be possible, the questionnaire was designed to include items that would provide for an analysis of the relationship between participants past experiences, their current status and program experiences, and outcomes following the program.

DESCRIPTION OF VARIABLES

School dropout. The APREF model was designed to target services to out-of-school youth. The total number of program participants was comprised of 45 percent high school dropouts. Thus, a major concern of the program administrators is how dropouts can be served through the programs to prevent extending a "failure cycle." The fact that there is a high percentage of dropouts among program participants, and in the study sample, also provides an opportunity to study the problems of dropouts as youth who have not succeeded in the educational link of the status attainment process. APREF was also interested in collection of information on school dropouts in the program who have returned to school or to another educational setting.

The item used to indicate school dropout status was, "Have you ever dropped out of school?" This measure provided data from all dropouts from any education system, including youth who dropped out, but subsequently furthered their education.

The items "Are you currently in school?' and "What is the highest grade you have completed?" were used to distinguish dropout-returnees from among all dropouts.

Family background. Family background has consistently been shown to be strongly related to student's educational achievement and level of attainment. A composite index of parents' socio-economic status has generally been used in the status attainment literature (Swell and Shah, 1968; Hauser, 1971). The expectations that parents have for children has been found to be a significant influence on attainment (Kerckoff, 1972). In research on the black family, a key question has been the relationship between family stability and education and occupation outcomes of children (Staples, 1971). Generally, it has been found that a stable family setting, even when one parent is absent, is an important factor in promoting positive achievements of children in school.

Three items were used as indicators of the family background of YEP participants:

1) "Where did you live before moving to this area?" (different city, different state, have not lived in another city or state.)

2) "How often have you and your family moved in the past ten years?"

3) How many brothers and sisters do you have?"

The first question basically addresses the geographic mobility of participant families. The second question, which addresses the extent to which the family has moved, provides a measure of the degree of mobility within the community thereby indicating the stability of the family. The number of times a family has moved may also be indicator of the relative family income since poorer families tend to move more often (Blau and Duncan, 1967).

The third question, concerning the size of the family, has previously been found to be negatively related to the status attainment of children (Staples, 1971). Since families from lower socio-economic backgrounds generally have a greater number of children, this item may partly reflect the social class background of participants. However, because the income requirements for the program preclude a wide range of variation between the social class backgrounds of participants, analyzing family size and school leaving in this study is likely to provide a fairly accurate measure of the true relationship, i.e. the effects of social class background will be controlled.

Parents Education. A key explanatory variable in the status attainment models has been parents' education background. The education level of parents has been demonstrated to have a strong independent effect on succeeding variables in the model, and to be positively related to children's education attainment. The indicators of partents' education in this study are "highest level of education your father has completed" and highest level of education your mother has completed." We would expect that the higher the level of parents education, the lower the probability that participants will be school dropouts.

Educational Aspirations. Research studies that have contributed to the development of the status attainment model have most often found that the educational aspirations of students is an intervening variable in the process, but that aspirations have an independent effect on the eventual level of attainment. That is, students with high educational goals more often have higher levels of attainment than students that have low education goals for themselves. In the interviews, YEP participants were asked, "Do you plan to further your education some day?", and a succeeding question, "How far in school do you plan to go?" We would expect that participants who have dropped

out would have lower aspirations for furthering their education than high school graduates.

CETA Experience. A large percentage of the participants enrolled in YEP have previously been enrolled in a local CETA program. APREF and DOL expressed an interest in determining the consequences of participation in a CETA program for subsequent education or employment, and particularly if CETA enrollees leave the program prior to completion. The interview instrument included an open-ended item on the respondent's experience with CETA programs. The responses were coded by type of program in which participants were enrolled (job training, summer employment program). This item is designed to be used for descriptive analysis of the relationship between YEP participants' school outcomes and their experiences in CETA programs.

Occupational Aspirations. The occupational aspirations variable has been shown to have a significant role in explaining occupational attainment (Duncan, Haller, and Portes, 1968; Featherman, 1972). Occupational aspirations are also related to education attainment -- students who have higher career aspirations tend to do better in school and attain higher occupations (Sewell, Haller, and Ohlendorf, 1970; Picou and Carter, 1976).

In the study of YEP, the occupational aspiration variable was operationalized by the item, "what is your career goal?" It was hypothesized that school dropouts are less likely to have well-defined aspirations and would not indicate a career goal. The lack of goals would be related to their decision to leave school. Conversely high school graduates should have occupational aspirations and career goals.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

As described above, the plan for selecting sample participants according to specified sub-samples was only partically fulfilled. The final sample is under-represented in the non-positive termination category and participants that have retained jobs over a longer period of time were not differentiated from recent placements.

Exhibit 1 provides a breakdown of the final sample according to several participant and program status characteristics. The sample can be compared to the population of YEP participants that had been enrolled to the point in the 1979 program year (June 1 - September 30) at which the interviews were completed. The data on all participants is from the APREF Quarterly Summary of Participant Characteristics.

The data show that over these key indicators of the characteristics of participants, the sample is highly representative of the total YEP population. Thus, even though there are limitations of sample size and the sample was not selected by a random method, the participants interviewed are representative of the overall participant population.

The distribution of the sample between the five cities in the study and the corresponding numbers for the participant population in each city are shown in Exhibit 2. This table also provides a breakdown of the high school dropouts in the sample by city, which is of particular interest for this study. The table shows the breakdown of participants who have ever been school dropouts by their current status, i.e. school attendee, high school graduate or dropout. The data show that a total of 18 of the school dropouts have returned to school (high school, vocational school, or college) and were in school at

COMPARISON OF PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLE WITH YEP POPULATION (AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 1979)

	SAMPLE	POPULATION
Total	212 (100%)	1713 (100%)
Sex		
Male	115 (54%)	897 (52%)
Female	97 (46%)	816 (48%)
Age		
14-15	3 (1%)	27 (2%)
16-19	135 (64%)	948 (55%)
20-21	58 (27%)	458 (55%)
over 21	16 (8%)	280 (27%)
Education Status*		
High School Student	17 (8%)	183 (11%)
H.S. Dropout	93 (44%)	756 (44%)
H.S. Graduate	74 (35%)	631 (37%)
Post H.S. Attendee	28 (13%)	143 (8%)
Ethnic/Racial Group		
White	12 (6%)	45 (3%)
Black	200 (94%)	1647 (96%)
Hispanic	0	19 (1%)
Program Status		
New Enrollee (first day)	38	INA
Placed	48 (23)	290 (17%)
Services	116	INA
Non-Positive Term	7	INA

* Current education status at YEP enrollment. Thus, 93 youth enrollees in the sample had dropped out and not returned to education.

EXHIBIT 2

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANT SAMPLE BY CITY AND BY NUMBER OF SCHOOL DROPOUTS

CITY	TOTAL IN SAMPLE	TOTAL DROPOUTS	RETURNED TO SCHOOL	GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL
Baltimore	56	18	3	4
Davenport (Quad Cities)	33	27	4	1
Jackson, Miss.	50	47	3	1
Jacksonville, Fla.	41	22	7	3
Louisville	32	10	1	4
TOTAL	212	124	18	15

the time of the study interviews. Fifteen of the respondents that had dropped out at some time subsequently returned to high school and graduated or earned a general equivalency diploma. Thus, a total of 33 of the 124 YEP participants in the study sample (or 27 percent) that have ever dropped out have subsequently returned to some type of education system or program.

RESULTS

The analysis of interview data to determine the relationships between participant characteristic variables and school dropouts was conducted with a series of bivariate distribution tables. To accomplish our tasks, the relationship of each variable hypothesized as related to the dropout rate among YEP participants was examined individually. The research design and analysis plan are based on an exploratory analysis of variables which have often been used in status attainment research. The analysis examines the applicability of these variables in explaining school dropout rates for minority and disadvantaged youth in the YEP.

An initial descriptive analysis of school dropouts in YEP is provided by a breakdown of the dropouts' self-reports of why they dropped out of school. The respondents were asked why they had dropped out of school at the time they did. The categories of reasons for dropping out are displayed in Exhibit 3. This exhibit includes both all participants that have ever dropped out and dropout-returnees.

The responses to this open-ended question probably do not provide an indication of all the factors related to leaving school, or in many cases even the real reason for leaving. However, the data do provide a summary of the participants' views of why they left. With an issue such as leaving school, there is very likely to be a number of interrelated factors in the decision.

PARTICIPANTS SELF-REPORTED REASONS

FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Reason	Total	City					School	
		Balt.	DavenP.	Jax, MS	Jax, FL	Louisv.	returnees	graduates
Bored	25	5	3	11	3	3	3	2
Could not get along	23	1	8	9	4	1	4	0
Personal reasons	17	2	6	8	1	0	0	0
Need a job	17	2	7	3	3	2	2	0
Pregnant	15	1	1	7	5	1	5	3
Put out	9	2	4	2	1	0	1	0
Records problem	7	1	0	2	4	0	0	0
Babysitting	4	1	0	3	0	0	0	0
Bad grades	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
Transferred to night school or skills training	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL*	123	16	31	47	22	7	15	5

EXHIBIT 3

* The differences between the total number of responses and total responses, by city from the number of dropouts shown in Exhibit 2 is due to five respondents not answering this question and four responsents giving two different reasons for dropping out.

In addition, for many dropouts the decision to leave is not a clear-cut one made at one point in time. There is often an interaction process between the student, school, and/or family. For example, nine respondents said they were "put out" of school.

The self-reports data demonstrate that academic reasons for leaving school were cited by very few of the respondents. Almost half of the students said they were either "bored" (23) or "could not get along" (23). Another 17 students cited "personal reasons." Thus, a majority of the students cited reasons related more to their failure of adjustment to the school environment. Fifteen young women cited pregnancy, which may indicate the school's unwillingness to allow students to stay in school. It could also indicate, being pregnant, these young women did not want to stay in school, or that pregnancy was the reason cited in leaving when there were also others. The data on dropout returnees and graduates show that about half of the pregnant young women who left have eventually returned to complete their education.

Only 17 of the dropouts said they left school because they needed a job. These results demonstrate that black youth are likely to leave school for behavorial and social reasons rather than for academic or economic reasons.

Family Background

The analysis of the relationship between the three indicators of family background and school dropouts are shown in Exhibits 4,5, and 6. The results demonstrate only very weak support for the hypothesis that family stability and characteristics of the YEP participants' families are related to whether or not they have finished school.*

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* The family background continues to be a factor for both dropouts and non-dropouts since over 90% of the participants still live with their parents (or parent).

The bivariate distribution of "where participants lived previously" and whether they dropped out or finished school is shown in Exhibit 4. Even though a higher proportion of the geographically mobile youth have dropped out, the small number does not provide strong support for the initial hypothesis. It may be that a higher proportion of the youth who have moved to the city and dropped out find their way into the program. The data on these participants show that there is a tendency for minority youth who are geographically mobile to have greater difficulties staying in school.

Exhibit 5 provides the results from cross-tabulating the number of times a family has moved their residence in the last 10 years with school drop-out rates. The data show a strong positive relationship between the number of times a black youth's family has moved and the probability of the youth dropping out of school:

a) forty-three percent of the participants whose family has never moved have dropped out at some time;

b) sixty-four percent of participants whose family has moved once were dropouts; and

c) in seventy percent of families who moved two to four times, the YEP participants dropped out of school.

Although the total number of enrollees who have moved over four times is small (total of 14 respondents), the ratio of dropouts to non-dropouts continues to increase.

A statistic that also shows the difference between families who have moved frequently from those moving infrequently is the average number of moves by sub-group. The average number of family moves for the whole sample is 1.57. The average for families of dropouts is 1.92, while the average move rate for participants who graduated from high school is 1.24.

EXHIBIT 4

ANALYSIS OF GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY AND PARTICIPANTS LEAVING SCHOOL

Moved From	School Dropout: Yes	School Dropout: No	Total
Different City	16	5	21 (10%)
Different State	17	6	23 (11%)
Other	5	4	9 (4%)
Have not moved from another city or state	86	73	159 (75%)
TOTAL	124	88	212

ANALYSIS OF FAMILIES' FREQUENCY OF CHANGING

RESIDENCE AND PARTICIPANTS LEAVING SCHOOL

Number of times moved in the last 10 years	School Dropouts: Yes	No	Total
None	35 (43%)	46 (57%)	81
1	36 (64%)	20 (36%)	56
2-4	42 (70%)	18 (30%)	60
5 or more	11 (79%)	3 (21%)	14
No answer		1	1
TOTAL	124 (58%)	88 (42%)	212
MEAN	1.92	1.24	1.57

Chi-Square = 9.24

(significance level = .05)

These analyses indicate that there is definitely a relationship between a frequent change of residence by a family and a lower probability of the children's chances of completing high school. It must be recalled, however, that this analysis is for a select sub-group of youth -- predominantly economically disadvantaged black youth. There are several possible explanations for these results. Certainly, one factor is the hypothesized effect of family stability on black student's educational attainment. The rate of moving is an indication of other kinds of disruptive factors in family life, other than simply the geographic movement within a city. It could also be argued that change of residence causes children to change schools more often. This factor may be important for poor minority youth's chances of success in school.

The cross-tabulation of number of siblings by dropout rates which is displayed in Exhibit 6 indicates that black youth from larger families have a higher probability of leaving school:

a) only 32 percent of the sample participants who are either an only child or have one brother or sister have dropped out of school;

b) participants with two or three siblings have dropped out at a rate of 41 percent which is below the average for all participants of 58 percent.

Families with four or more children show significantly higher dropout rates. Black youth from these families have at least a 65 percent probability of dropping out of school.

The mean statistic for the dropout and non-dropout sub-samples clearly show the differences in family sizes. Dropouts have an average of 6.5 brothers or sisters while non-dropouts have an average of four siblings.

ANALYSIS OF FAMILY SIZE AND

PARTICIPANTS LEAVING SCHOOL

Number of Siblings	School Dropout: Yes	%	No	%	Total
0-1	16	(32%)	18	(68%)	34
2-3	20	(41%)	29	(59%)	49
4-5	30	(65%)	16	(35%)	46
6-8	35	(81%)	8	(19%)	43
9 or more	28	(70%)	12	(30%)	40
TOTAL	124	(58%)	88	(42%)	212
MEAN	6.48		4.09		5.35

Chi-Square = 21.8
(significance level = .01)

The data support the hypothesis that family size is related to school dropout rates. The results are consistent with the body of research on the consequences of family size for the education and career outcomes of children. In previous studies, the effect of large families in depressing the status attainments of youth has been partly related to social class. A portion of the relationship shown in these data also is likely to be due to socio-economic variations. However, the results demonstrated here for a group of youth from basically similar social class backgrounds support the proposition that as the number of children in the family increases, the probability of the children attaining higher education levels decreases.

Parents Education

The results from the cross-tabulation of father's education level by school dropout vs. non-dropout are found in Exhibit 7. The cross tabulation of mother's education level and dropout vs. non-dropout is shown as a separate table on the same page. Since the results for father's and mother's education are very similar, the relationships for the two variables will be analyzed together.

Both father's education and mother's education show an overall weak relationship with school dropout rates. Higher levels of parental education, through high school graduation, are not related to lower dropout rates. Black youth whose fathers have graduated have a 60 percent dropout rate, while participants with high school graduate mothers have a 57 percent dropout rate (average equals 58%).

However, the effect of parents completing education past high school does appear to increase the probability that children will not leave school. The differences are not large between parents with a high school education

ANALYSIS OF PARENTS EDUCATION ATTAINMENT AND PARTICIPANTS LEAVING SCHOOL

Father's Education Level	School Dropout Yes	No	Total
Grade School	17 (77%)	5 (23%)	22
Junior H.S./Some H.S.	16 (50%)	16 (50%)	32
High School Graduate	27 (60%)	18 (40%)	45
Some Coll./Coll. Grad. other post-H.S.	9 (43%)	12 (57%)	21
Sub-Total	69 (57%)	51 (43%)	120
Don't know	55 (60%)	37 (40%)	92
TOTAL	124 (58%)	88 (42%)	212

Chi-Square = 4.30
(Significane level = N.S.)

Mother's Education Level	School Dropout Yes	No	Total
Grade School	12 (67%)	6 (33%)	18
Junior H.S./Some H.S.	27 (56%)	21 (44%)	48
High School Graduate	39 (56%)	30 (44%)	69
Some Coll./Coll. Grad other post-H.S.	11 (39%)	17 (61%)	28
Sub-Total	89 (55%)	62 (45%)	183
Don't know	35 (71%)	14 (29%)	49
TOTAL	124 (58%)	88 (42%)	212

Chi-Square = 3.16
(Significance level= N.S.)

and those with at least some college or other post-high school education, but they are likely to be significant were the data obtained from a somewhat larger sample. The relationship of post-high school education to lower dropout rates is consistent with one of the basic findings from the status attainment literature. It has generally been found in those studies that one of the best predictors of whether the parents have had some college (Sewell and Shah, 1968; Hauser, 1972). The results from these data show that some post-high school education of parents is related to lower dropout rates.

The analysis of data on parents education also show some relationship between knowledge of parents education level and leaving school. Forty-three percent of the interviewees did not know what their father's education level was and 23 percent of the sample did not know their mother's education level completed. These results provide two kinds of information for understanding school dropout rates of minority, disadvantaged youth:

1) Almost twice as many participants do not know their father's education level as do not have knowledge of their mother's education. This may indicate the extent of absent fathers in participant families.

2) Not knowing the mother's education level is a stronger predictor of dropping out than lack of knowledge of father's education (71% vs. 60%). This could be evidence that the mothers of black youth have relatively more influence in determining educational outcomes of participants that the fathers.

When a youth is unaware of his mother's education, it may be that the mother has not transmitted her expectations and aspirations for his/her education and career. This could explain the reason for the higher dropout rates for youth who do not know their mother's level of education attainment. Apparently, lack of knowing father's education, and thus influence of the fathers, is not

as important for educational outcomes for those youth with characteristics similar to those in the study sample.

Educational Aspirations

Next, we consider the results for the hypothesized relationship between educational aspirations of YEP participants and whether or not they have ever dropped out of school. The analysis will be conducted in two parts - first, for all participants in the sample, and second, for dropouts that have returned to school. The cross-tabular analysis for education aspirations by dropout vs. non-dropout and dropout-returnees is in Exhibit 8.

The primary finding from the analysis of these variables is that there is little relationship between aspirations and dropping out. Dropouts and non-dropouts are very similar in not having any interest in further education. According to these data, ninety-six percent of dropouts have no plans for further education, while 94 percent of non-dropouts have no plans for further education.*

A cross-tabulation of education plans (aspirations) by dropouts returned to school shows that none of the dropouts who have returned to some type of education have any future goals for education.

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* These results must be considered in light of the fact that responses to the interview item concerning plans for further education may have been affected by where the question was placed in the interview schedule. It followed several questions asking for participants' opinion about the school they went to. The question may have been interpreted as referring to either their old school or any type of academic education. Since the question did not provide for any specification of different types of education, e.g., vocational skills training, job training, etc., it is difficult to tell if respondents were referring to the type of school they had been in or any education program.

EXHIBIT 8

ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND LEAVING SCHOOL

School Dropout

Plans for Further Education	Yes	No	Total	Dropout Returnees
Yes	5 (4%)	5 (6%)	10	0
No	119 (96%)	82 (94%)	201	18
No Answer		1	1	
TOTAL	124	88	212	18

A possible explanation for the finding of little differences in aspirations is that the youth enrolled in YEP are all looking for a job or have otained a job. The data may indicate that most black youth in the program do not see any relationship between education and working. They may not perceive that more training or schooling may be necessary to advance to a better job. Many youth, including high school graduates, probably see YEP as an alternative to the school experiences which they have not found enjoyable or productive.

CETA Experience

The relationship between participants' experiences in CETA programs and their school outcomes are shown in Exhibit 9. One of the research questions that APREF and DOL were interested in was the relationship between participation in a CETA program and the degree of success the youth have in school and in YEP.

The two types of CETA programs that YEP participants have primarily been involved in are the summer employment program and skills training programs. Most of the youth in the summer program participate while still in school (age 14 through 19), while skills training courses are generally offered only to dropouts or high school graduates. Thus, the two types of programs have a different time relationship to whether or not youth have dropped out.

Among the group of YEP participants that answered the question on CETA experience, 82 youth, or 51 percent of those responding, had been enrolled in either a CETA summer program or job training program. About two thirds of these youth had been in a summer job through CETA. A smaller proportion of the summer CETA enrollees dropped out of school (16 of 51, or 31%) than the proportion of all YEP participants who dropped out (58%). This

EXHIBIT 9

ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS CETA

EXPERIENCES AND LEAVING SCHOOL

	School Dropout		
CETA Experience	Yes	No	Total
Summer	16	35	51
Job training	21	10	31
SUB-TOTAL	37	45	82
None	36	42	78
TOTAL	124	88	212

may indicate that the summer program does help minority youth to stay in school. The results could also be a factor of the particular youth who were recruited to the YEP. The small numbers of respondents make determination of the validity of results more problematic.

Sixty-eight percent (21 of 31) of the YEP participants who were in a CETA job training program were school dropouts. These data may indicate that these CETA programs tend to serve dropouts. It also may indicate that most former CETA job trainees in YEP who did not obtain a job through CETA or dropped out of the program also were school dropouts. This group of youth may be fairly well along a "cycle of failure," i.e. high school and job training.

Occupational Aspirations

Exhibit 10 provides a breakdown of school dropout vs. non-dropout by YEP participants occupational aspirations (career plans). These data allow for a basic analysis of the relationship between occupational aspirations and education attainment. Since only a minority of the participants are still in school, it also is not a time-ordered analysis of aspirations and education outcomes.

Three-fourths of all the participants have some kinds of career plans. Seventy-one percent of the dropouts have some plans and 78 percent of non-dropouts have career plans. These career plans of participants could have been made since receiving the YEP services. The differences may indicate that high school graduates have a somewhat better idea of what kind of employment career they would like. However, the high proportion of participants who have career plans and the small sample size do not allow any definitive results to be obtained.

ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND LEAVING SCHOOL

Career Plans	School Dropout: Yes	School Dropout: No	Total
Yes	87 (71%)	68 (78%)	155 (75%)
No	36 (29%)	20 (22%)	56 (25%)
TOTAL	123	88	211

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis of the relationship between several characteristics of YEP participants and their rate of dropping out of school has produced research findings which expand our knowledge of the dropout problem among minority youth. Some of the findings also add to the existing knowledge of the status attainment process.

A primary finding of analyses of YEP school dropouts is that differences in family background have a significant relationship to whether participants complete high school. Enrollees in YEP (who are almost all poor black youth) who come from very large families are more likely to leave school before graduation. It was found that among families that move their home more often, there is a higher probability that the children will not finish high school. One interpretation of both of these findings could be that both family variables are measuring social class effects. Lower class families generally have a greater number of children and they also tend to move more often. But, to the extent that the income requirements for YEP enrollment have provided a control for social class, the results indicate that family mobility and size have independent relationships to whether children complete school.

An interpretation of the relationship of family mobility to dropping out is that changing residence may be disruptive to the child's relationships to teachers and other students. Higher frequency of moving also may indicate general instability in family relations which would impact on the school performance of children. The findings for size of family tend to verify similar findings on education and occupation attainment for American youth in general.

A second major finding was that there is a fairly weak relationship between parents education attainment and participants dropping out of school or graduating. Parents who have some college or post-high school education have a lower probability of their children not finishing high school, but levels of parents education from high school graduate down do not appear to improve the chances of children to graduate.

An important finding from the analysis of the relationship between parents and participants education attainment is that a significant proportion of both dropouts and non-dropouts do not know what level of education their parents have completed. Several implications of the findings were drawn. First, there were twice as many youth who did not know their father's education level as knew their mother's. These results may indicate the effect of the absent father. Second, it was found that among youth who do not know their mother's education level, there is a somewhat higher proportion who drop out of school. It was concluded that the mother's education background and the child's knowledge of that background are more important for the education attainment of poor black youth than the father's education level or knowledge of his education.

These results support the findings in the status attainment literature that the mother's education level is a significant factor in the education attainment of children. From the findings of this study we might additionally conclude that the lack of communication of educational expectations from mother to child, indicated by the youth's lack of knowledge of mother's education level, has an effect on whether minority youth complete school.

A third conclusion that can be made from the results of this study is that black youth in the YEP have low education aspirations. Participants' educational ambitions do not appear to be related to whether or not they graduated from high school. With some reservations in the validity of the

data, it appears that black youth in the program are either not interested in furthering their education or that they have little knowledge of the educational options available to them, particularly education or training directly related to obtaining jobs with career-potential. The lack of plans for education may also indicate a general disinterest in education due to the poor experiences both graduates and dropouts had in the public school systems.

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